



U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)
Local Grants Program
<http://mepi.state.gov/>

**Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)
for Applications to the 2017-2018 MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement**

U.S. Embassy Israel

PLEASE REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT WHEN PREPARING AN APPLICATION

REVISED: January 29, 2018 Please note revised items are highlighted in **green**

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Local Grants Overview

The Office of Assistance Coordination's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Program seeks single-country proposals for its Local Grants Program. The Local Grants Program serves as the MEPI Program's most direct means of supporting organizations in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Local Grants Program seeks projects that build links among citizens, civil society, government, and the private sector in response to emerging opportunities. The Local Grants Program supports projects that align with U.S. foreign policy goals and promotes U.S. interests in the region, enhancing stability and increasing prosperity across North Africa and the Middle East.

These grants are designed to support two areas of the MEPI Strategic Framework:

- *Participatory Governance:* Enable civil society to effectively interact with government officials to increase responsiveness to citizen needs. Enhance citizens' ability to actively participate in their governments and develop a more informed citizenry. Enable government officials' engagement with, and responsiveness to, their citizens to resolve issues of shared concern.
- *Economic Reform:* Enable citizens, policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector with the skills and resources to provide economic opportunity, foster economic growth, and promote improved business enabling environments.

The MEPI Program's Regional Offices, located in the Middle East and North Africa, manage the Local Grants Program. Applications are reviewed and evaluated on the criteria outlined within these Proposal Submission Instructions. For this PSI, U.S. Embassy Israel seeks to support projects that will contribute to the following Key Objective areas identified by the [MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement \(APS\)](#), published November 30, 2017 under CFDA number 19.500:

- Foster inclusive economic growth that reaches marginalized communities, youth and women
- Increase youth engagement in meaningful economic and civic activities
- Encourage citizens' engagement in participatory governance and decision-makers' willingness to work with citizen groups and civil society organizations
- Work towards gender parity and enhance gender equality

The specific project focus areas that this PSI seeks to support are outlined in the section below.

U.S. Embassy Israel Priority Areas

In addition to the overarching objectives identified above, U.S. Embassy Israel has identified specific project priority areas as outlined below, and sets forth the following guidance for applicants:

Problem Statement:

Israel is a leader in entrepreneurship and business development as evidenced in its flourishing hi-tech sector; however, certain sectors of Israeli society are not sufficiently integrated in the economic activity and resulting benefits. The Israeli government has been working closely with several NGOs to integrate challenged communities (including the ultra-Orthodox and Arab communities) into the workforce with the goal of closing economic gaps in these traditionally underserved communities and boosting growth for the entire economy. Fostering entrepreneurial activity is necessary to help businesses mature into small and medium-sized enterprises that can provide innovative solutions for economic and social problems in the region.

In addition, the government is allocating funds to challenged communities in order to support their development – but many local authorities lack capacity to fully take advantage of these opportunities to address their community’s social and economic growth. These local authorities need special assistance to improve their coordination with the government and create better outcomes for their citizens.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325, to which both the United States and Israel are parties, encourages countries to develop National Action Plans that will more fully empower women to have meaningful roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building and peacekeeping, stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. While there has been some progress, political participation of Israeli women remains limited, in particular within disadvantaged communities.

Project Priorities Areas:

Area A: Foster inclusive economic growth that reaches marginalized communities, youth, and women.

U.S. Embassy Israel seeks proposals that will further support the integration of disadvantaged communities in the Israeli business and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Applicants could also encourage and create long-lasting partnerships between entrepreneurial support programs and private companies to amplify the impact of the projects. Activities could include but are not limited to: Enabling seed-stage startups to shift to the intermediate/expansion stage or established startup/nascent businesses to continue growing and create more jobs; or stimulating firms to increase job creation at a faster pace.

Area B: Encourage citizens’ engagement in participatory governance and decision-makers’ willingness to work with citizen groups and civil society organizations.

U.S. Embassy Israel seeks innovative and sustainable projects that actively support increased cooperation between civil society, local governments, and the business sector with the goal of effectively addressing specific needs of the community and strengthening local governance. Activities could include but are not limited to: Building the capacity of local authorities and local professionals to implement solutions to specific issues; strengthening public-private partnerships; and advancing cooperation between governmental officials and civil society groups to solve community problems.

Area C: Work towards gender parity and enhancing women's participation in advancing peace and security issues.

U.S. Embassy Israel seeks proposals that work on advancing gender equality and mainstreaming. Activities could include but are not limited to: Increasing the participation of women and incorporating gender perspectives in peace and security efforts; advancing measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence; or engaging men and boys as partners in promoting women's participation to prevent and resolve conflicts. Activities must include women from diverse religious, social, or economic backgrounds.

Priority Beneficiaries:

Preference will be given to Projects focused on supporting periphery communities and disadvantaged groups.

Previous MEPI Connections:

MEPI Alumni are encouraged to apply, and should note their MEPI connection on the application. We also welcome new partners and all USG alumni (including IVLP/Exchanges/Fulbright, YES etc).

Public Private Partnership:

Mission Israel encourages the application of public-private partnership approaches in implementation of MEPI grants.

Deadlines and Information Sessions

Proposals must be submitted to U.S. Embassy Israel no later than 13:00 pm, local time, on February 14, 2018. Please use the email subject line "MEPI Local Grant Application for Israel".

Completed applications with all relevant attachments should be emailed to U.S. Embassy Israel at mepitelaviv@state.gov.

For further inquiries, applicants may also send emails to mepitelaviv@state.gov

Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement, Grant, or Fixed Amount Award

Maximum Award Amount: \$200,000

Minimum Award Amount: \$50,000

Length of Project Period: 12-24 Months

Questions and Bidders' Conferences (Information Sessions):

Questions: If you have any question please send them to mepitelaviv@state.gov by **February 2, 2018**. Answers will be published at this LINK

Bidders' Conferences: The embassy will also hold three **Bidders' conferences** (info sessions) at the following dates and locations **:

January 24th, 2018 in Nazareth

17:00 p.m. at Maaof NBIC Offices on 87 Paulus VI, white Center Building, 6th floor, Nazareth

January 25th, 2018 in Jerusalem

14:30 p.m. at the American Center in Jerusalem on 19 Keren Hayesod Street, Jerusalem

January 26th, 2018 in Tel Aviv

11:00 a.m. at the Office of Public Affairs, US Embassy on 1 Ben Yehuda Street, Migdalor Building 8th Floor, Tel Aviv

****Please register your name and your organization's name at mepitelaviv@state.gov
Space is limited**

Eligibility

For detailed eligibility requirements applicable to all MEPI Local Grants applicants, please refer to the Funding Opportunity [Annual Program Statement](#), which was published on November 30, 2017 under CFDA 19.500.

Additionally, all applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria specific to this PSI. Applicants must:

- Have prior experience working in Israel on the issues their projects address.
- Have their headquarters based in Israel and must be registered with the Israeli Ministry of Justice.
- Have all required registrations as outlined below.

Individuals are not eligible to apply to this announcement.

Implementers of a MEPI Local Grant that their current MEPI project is still under implementation by July, 1 2018 are not eligible to apply to this funding opportunity.

Required Registrations

As detailed in the MEPI Local Grants Annual Program Statement, all organizations must have the following active registrations:

- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
- NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code
- System for Award Management (SAM)

- Internal Revenue Service (IRS), if applicable

Registration with the IRS may be required. Please review the [Annual Program Statement](#) to determine if this registration is necessary for your organization.

Note: if organizations are in the process of registration for any of the above, and have encountered documented, technical registration issues, these applications will be reviewed for eligibility on a case by case basis. Per U.S. law, valid and active registration in the relevant systems is a requirement to receive grant funds.

The registrant or entity is required to create an account in each of these websites by initially creating a Username and Password in all sites: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), if necessary; D&B for a UEI; and ultimately the System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

The Legal Business Name and Address must be precise and **MATCH EXACTLY** when entering it into the IRS, D&B DUNS, NCAGE, and SAM.gov websites – this includes spaces, parentheses, capitalization, small letters, punctuation, etc. **Please apply for the D&B DUNS Number and NCAGE Code at the same time to reduce waiting time of information.**

For detailed information on registering for the MEPI Local Grants Program, please consult the [2017 Annual Program Statement](#).

Application Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the project narrative and budget templates provided with the [APS](#). If an organization chooses not to use the provided templates, documents submitted still must capture all the requested information outlined in the template and clearly label each section for clarity.

Complete applications must include the following:

1. **[Project Narrative](#)** (not to exceed ten [10] pages in Microsoft Word). Project narratives should articulate a logical relationship between proposed activities and desired outcomes – presenting the cause and effect “chain of results” that a project hopes to achieve.

Please note the ten page limit does not include the any other required application document, including Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word or Adobe file.

2. **[Detailed Line-Item Budget](#)** (preferably in Microsoft Excel) that includes three [3] columns including the request to MEPI, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see Budget Template for more information on budget format). A summary budget should also be included using the OMB approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample). **Costs must be in U.S. dollars.** Detailed line-item budgets for sub-grantees should be included in additional tabs within the excel workbook. The budget template includes a section which allows for substantive explanations and justifications for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, MEPI recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the SF-424A. Personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff, base salary, and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should provide additional information that might not be

readily apparent in the detailed-line item budget, not simply repeat what is represented numerically in the budget, i.e. salaries are for salaries or travel is for travel. A line item budget template and additional budget guidance is provided with the APS.

3. Roles and responsibilities of key project personnel (2 pages maximum): Please include short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.

4. References: Full names and contact information (email, phone) of beneficiaries or partners involved in a project your organization conducted within the past two years, whom we might contact to ask about your work.

5. [Forms](#): Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A, and SF424B; completed and signed SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (if applicable). See [APS](#) for more details.

6. [Audit](#): Your organization’s most recent financial audit statement. See [APS](#) for more details.

7. Organization’s background: Applications should include their organization’s chart, organization’s local registration document, a list of previous donors and two letters of recommendation from a recent funder if applicable.

8. MEPI Alumni Status Form: Please complete the MEPI Alumni Status Summary template, which is provided along with all other recommended templates and guidance with the [APS](#).

8. Required IF APPLICABLE: If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a .pdf file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by program and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding and does not count towards the page limit. If your proposal involves subawards to organizations charging indirect costs, please also submit the applicable NICRA as a .pdf file.

Optional Additional Materials

Additional optional attachments may include timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding/agreement, etc. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the project implementation (e.g. from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.

Please note: The MEPI Program may request additional documents not included in this PSI should your project be considered for funding.

Additional information that successful applicants must submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- 1) Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the MEPI Selection Committee;
- 2) Submission of required documents to register in any applicable U.S. government grant systems, if receiving MEPI Program funding for the first time, unless an exemption is provided;

3) Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award.

All submissions must be submitted in English

Submitting an Application

To submit your application, please follow the steps below:

1. **Review the completed application documents** (Application for Federal Assistance Form (SF-424), Project Narrative, Budget, Budget Narrative, Budget Information Forms (SF-424A), and completed and signed SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (if applicable)) for accuracy and make any necessary changes, making sure you have all required materials. **Please note: A signature is required on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).**
2. **All application materials must be in English and all costs must be in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided.** For any documents provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version. (Please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents).
3. **Send all documents via email to U.S. Embassy Israel MEPITelaviv@state.gov.** The application materials must be submitted electronically by the designated due date and time noted in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all material submitted in the grant application package is complete, accurate, and current. The MEPI Program strongly encourages all applicants to submit their materials before the designated due date to ensure that the application has been received and is complete.

Proposal Review Process

A MEPI Selection Committee at the U.S. Embassy in Israel reviews all local grant proposals. The U.S. Embassy in Israel will inform organizations if their proposals will or will not be shortlisted for further consideration. Only the most competitive proposals received by MEPI Committees will be selected for further consideration by MEPI's regional offices, which will process and negotiate the awards. The issuance of a grant award by a MEPI Regional Office is contingent on the availability of funds and the negotiation and finalization of an approved budget and award package.

Award Notices

Applicants who do not advance to the Technical Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

MEPI expects to notify applicants about the status of their application by April 30, 2018. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal

with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. **MEPI reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.**

Proposal Review Criteria

Applications should address the evaluation criteria outlined below. Selection Committee members will evaluate each application individually against the following criteria, totaling in 100 possible points.

Approach and Responsiveness to Priority Areas (40 points)

- Proposal addresses one of the three objectives outlined in the PSI (Area A, B, or C).
- Project activities target beneficiaries from periphery communities and disadvantaged groups as stated as priority in the PSI.
- Approach is clearly outlined and takes into account the unique context of the area where the project is being proposed.
- Application addresses how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners as appropriate. If local partners have been identified, the MEPI Program strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. If applicable, the specific roles of any sub-awardees should be defined.
- Approach is innovative and creative and does not duplicate or simply add to past or ongoing efforts. This does not exclude projects that clearly build off existing successful projects in a new and innovative way from consideration. Where similar activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities and how these efforts will be coordinated. Applicant details activities which include women from diverse religious, social, or economic backgrounds
- Applicant details activities which include women from diverse religious, social, or economic backgrounds.

Project Design & Achieve Objectives: (25 points)

- Proposal provides a clear articulation of how proposed activities will contribute to the project objectives AND in turn will also contribute to overall MEPI key objectives.
- Activities are clearly developed and detailed, including estimated timeframe.
- Proposal clearly explains how activities will achieve desired results, and the overall project design is realistic in terms of feasibility and expectations.
- Proposal includes an articulation of a theory of change or logic model to demonstrate how the project will achieve desired impact.
- Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable, results-focused and achievable in a reasonable time frame.
- Project beneficiaries are clearly defined, and selection criteria for identifying specific beneficiaries are provided if applicable.

Institution's Record and Capacity: (15 points)

- Proposal includes examples of successful past programming that illustrate responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants.
- Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives.

Cost Effectiveness: (15 points)

- Budget indicates reasonable cost estimates based on local standard rates.
- All costs are clearly defined in terms of purpose, as well as detail indicating how amounts have been calculated. Budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate its necessity, appropriateness, and its link to the project objectives and activities.
- Project design takes into account opportunities for cost-savings and budget does not include expenses that are not essential to effective project implementation.

Please note: While cost-share is NOT a requirement, MEPI does encourage applicants to leverage organizational and/or other external resources where possible. If cost-sharing is included in the budget, the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-sharing, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, the MEPI Program's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

MEPI Alumni Status (5 points)

MEPI alumni are encouraged to apply, but we also welcome new partners. Applicants may qualify for preference based on the states of at least one individual at the organization.

MEPI alumni are defined as:

- a) former participants in one of MEPI's exchange programs;
- b) beneficiaries in previous MEPI training programs last more than 5 weeks;
- c) or individuals who have held a leadership role supporting MEPI programming at an organization that has received a previous MEPI grant.

Additional Information

The MEPI Program will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization or armed actors.

Applicants should be aware that the MEPI Program understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that the MEPI Program cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.